



## Education and HIV/AIDS

### **The link between education and economic development**

- There is a clear correlation between education and the economic sustainability of a country. No country has ever achieved stable economic growth without reaching approximately a 40% adult literacy rate.
- The average years of schooling completed is about three and a half years in sub-Saharan Africa, while in more developed countries the average is ten years.
- A recent 100-country study by the World Bank shows that increasing the percentage of women who receive secondary education by one percent boosts a country's per capita income growth by 0.3 percentage points.

### **The link between education and HIV/AIDS**

#### *Education is a key defense against HIV/AIDS.*

- With education, people are empowered to control their lives by making informed decisions.
- HIV infection rates are doubled among young people who do not finish primary school.
- According to the Global Campaign for Education, if all children received a primary education, as many as 700,000 cases of HIV could be prevented each year.

#### *Increasing education for young girls is vital in preventing HIV/AIDS.*

- The HIV/AIDS epidemic disproportionately impacts young women and girls.
- Getting girls into school is crucial because educated women improve the health and well-being of families, have fewer children, and do more to educate their children.
- A recent 63-country study by the International Food Policy Research Institute found that education of girls and young women may account for as much as 43% of the decline in malnutrition between 1970 and 1995.
- Girls' education can reduce infection rates by encouraging poverty reduction, economic independence, female empowerment, and awareness of human rights.
- Educated women are more likely to be economically independent, utilize family planning methods, and work outside the home. They are less likely to remain in abusive relationships.

### **How can universal primary education be achieved?**

#### **Eliminate school fees**

- School fees keep thousands of children out of school every year

- 125 million children do not go to school
  - School fees keep the poorest children out of school in many countries: often, parents cannot afford tuition, books, uniforms, or building fees, which average \$50 per child per year.
  - School fees often lead to poverty-driven sex work in families that cannot afford to pay them.
- If school fees are eliminated, thousands more children will receive primary education. While eliminating fees we must also work to train and retain adequate teachers and provide adequate materials and facilities.
- When school fees were removed in Kenya and Uganda, school enrollment jumped by 22% and 40%, respectively. When fees were removed in Tanzania, school enrollment doubled.

#### *Initiatives to eliminate school fees*

- International and child health organizations such as the World Bank and UNICEF are working to abolish school fees in several countries.
- The Assistance for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children of Developing Countries Act, signed into law in 2005, authorizes the abolition of school fees as a key strategy to addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
- Congress has appropriated \$15 million for 2005 and 2006 to help increase funding for countries that are ready to eliminate school fees.
- More must be done to achieve free universal primary education globally. Universal primary education can only be realized if the international community increases and sustains funding to governments moving to abolish school fees.

#### **Support the Education for All—Fast Track Initiative**

- The Education for All—Fast Track Initiative (FTI) was created by the World Bank in 2002 with the mission of achieving universal primary education by 2015. It is the first-ever global compact on education, and it aims to provide the incentives and resources to poorer nations to build, implement and sustain solid education plans. The FTI links major donors with countries that have demonstrated a strong commitment to achieving universal primary education.
- It is expected that by 2008, there may be as many as 60 countries within the FTI partnership. However, successful growth of FTI requires greater economic and political support from donor nations and organizations as well as increased efforts to reform by recipient countries.

*To get involved in advancing free universal education throughout the world and generating the political will to end the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its socio-economic and political root causes, join the Global AIDS Alliance Grassroots Network. Sign up at <http://www.globalaidsalliance.org/getinvolved.cfm> or email [grassroots@globalaidsalliance.org](mailto:grassroots@globalaidsalliance.org).*

#### **Resources**

<http://www.campaignforeducation.org/about/about.html>  
<http://www.globalaidsalliance.org/docs/Girls%20can't%20wait.doc>  
<http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=1954>  
[http://www1.worldbank.org/education/efafti/documents/factsheet\\_basic.pdf](http://www1.worldbank.org/education/efafti/documents/factsheet_basic.pdf)  
[www.globalactionforchildren.org](http://www.globalactionforchildren.org)  
[http://www.globalaidsalliance.org/advocacy\\_brief\\_education\\_and\\_AIDS.cfm](http://www.globalaidsalliance.org/advocacy_brief_education_and_AIDS.cfm)  
[www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)  
[www.ifpri.org](http://www.ifpri.org)